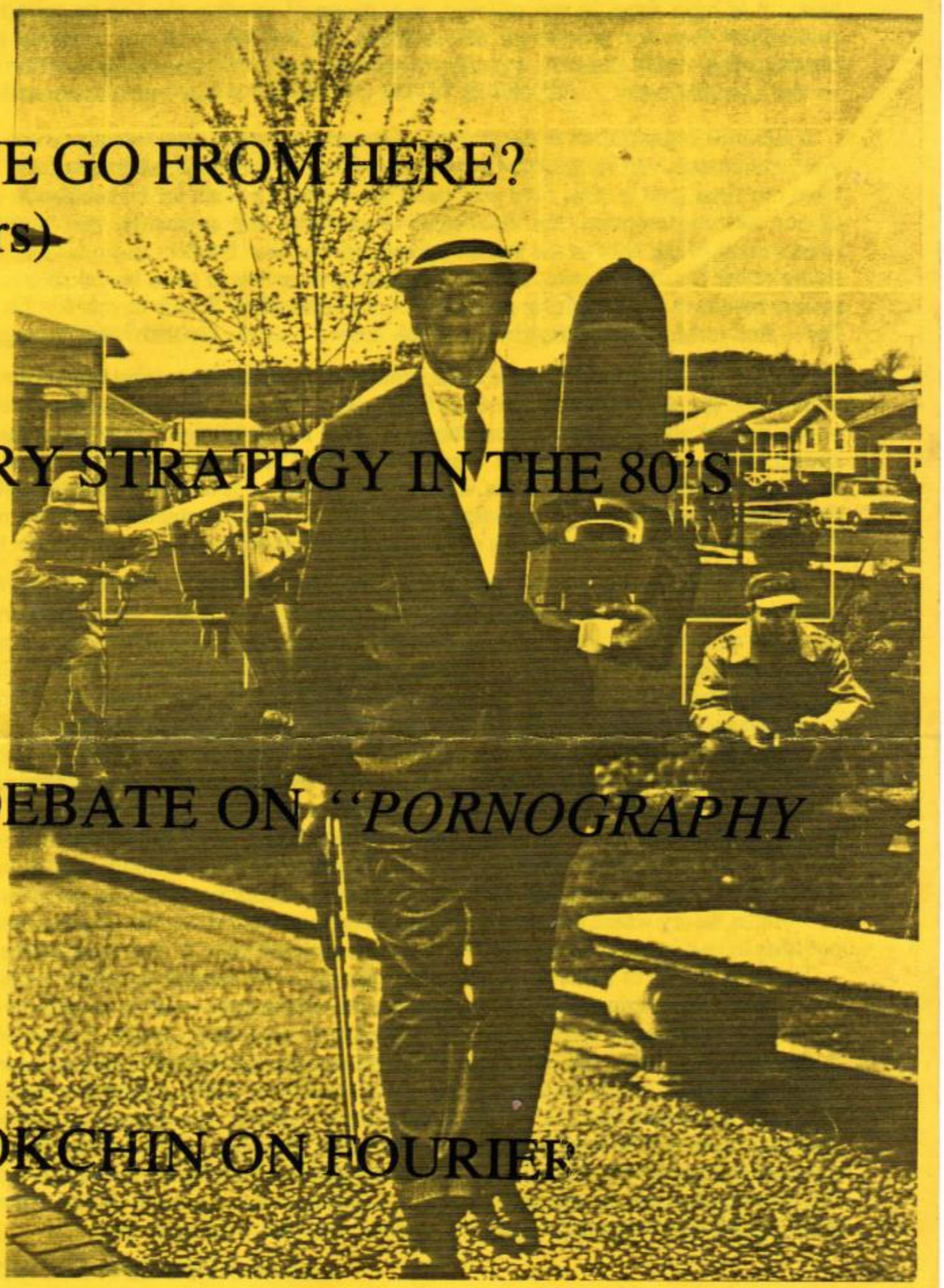
UP FROM THE ASHES

A Journal for the Self-Education of Revolutionary Activists Volume 1.....No. 2 75c



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? (Our Best Letters)

REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY IN THE 80'S

CALL FOR A DEBATE ON *"PORNOGRAPHY AND SILENCE"*

BOOKCHIN ON FOURIER?

Richard Slye

WHY IS ANARCHISM OBSOLETE?

IS THERE LIFE AFTER LENINISM?

The following leaflet was distributed to members of the Workers' Communist Party (yet another Leninist group on the verge of collapse) in Toronto. We thought it would serve as an appropiate introduction to this issue.

"One of the great crimes of the 'new communist movement' of the 1970's is the great number of revolutionary activists whose ability to contribute to the revolutionary process has (at least temporarily) been destroyed. A Leninist organization resembles nothing so much as a revolving door, with an extremely high percentage of people leaving or being burnt out within a year or two....It is high time, in my opinion, that those of us who tried to be 'good Leninist revolutionaries' and failed come to the realization that our emotional alienation is not the result of our 'inability to unite with proletarian ideology' or some such blaming-the-victim bullshit...but a quite rational and understandable reaction to **bourgeois** ideology and a bourgeois institution — the Leninist party." -- **WHAT IS TO BE UNDONE? A Leninist Reconsiders**

A Leninist organization is the embryo of the society which, consciously or not, Leninists are struggling to bring into being. Thus, if you're alienated, you're alienated by your own future. No meaningful discussion of strategy and tactics can take place until we get clear on what our final goal is. Our final goal must be nothing less than the emancipation of everyday life: the freeing of people from alienated labour and consumption, the emancipation of desire and sensuality, the overcoming of the division between work and play, the overcoming of the split in the human personality between intellect and intuition, and emotion and will. In other words, our goal is the living of life for its own sake, and not mortgaging ourselves to some unreal abstraction such as Society, History, or Communism, which merely results in the further mystification of our oppression. Search in vain for this "final goal" in any of Lenin's writings, and you will fail to find it (Marx was a little better on this score — see the **Grundrisse,** Vintage edition, p. 448).

That this is what we all want is made evident every time people rebel against the joyless, self-sacrificing, hierarchical domination that constitutes our experience inside a Leninist party. Capitalist and hierarchical methods of organization will not contrive to produce a non-capitalist and non-hierarchical future society. It simply won't happen, as the experience of every Leninist revolution to date has shown. If we have to rely on the "revealed wisdom" of our leaders, then we're already defeated — each and every one of us has to discover that wisdom for ourselves. Each and every one of us has to be both theoretician and practitioner, and not just "raw material" for the Central Committee's "processing plant" (to use Mao's metaphor). And we need to train the "masses" to themselves be leaders. People will never learn how to run society except by taking matters into their own hands **now**.

As we said in our call for the journal **Up From the Ashes**, "LENINISM IS DEAD", but it's taken until now for the corpse to stop twitching. The history of socialism has seen two great waves: that of social-democracy, and that of Leninism. Both have failed miserably as agents of revolution and of human liberation (indeed, their close affinity to one another has been analyzed in the first issue of **Up From the Ashes** in an article entitled "Power is the Opiate of the Middle Class"). Both these failures reveal not only an insufficiency of objective conditions, but, more importantly, a cancer lurking at the heart of Marxism itself. As ex-Marxist-Leninists, we have undertaken to familiarize ourselves with the critique of it made by numerous anarchist and ex-Marxist thinkers. Nonetheless, the historical alternative — anarchism — while preserving its opposition to all forms of oppression, has also not proven itself fully capable — theoretically and practically — of bringing the new world into being. More than ever, what's called for is the formation of a new theoretical synthesis going "beyond red, black, green and lavender". Such a synthesis would incorporate that which is still valuable and revolutionary in the marxist tradition — the truths, critically considered, advanced by thinkers such as Luxembourg and Liebknecht, Pannekoek and Gorter, Korsch, Gramsci, Marcuse, and the Frankfurt School. It would seek to build on the shoulders of the Situationists and Murray Bookchin — each representing the high point of their respective traditions (Marxist and anarchist), and would drink deeply from the well of feminist theory where the most important theoretical work of the last 10 years has occurred. This **third wave**, if it can be called that, is not likely to rise in influence as quickly as those which preceded it, but, nonetheless, it is the **wave of the future.**

The original sin of Marxism was its determinism — its attempt to reduce the possibility and necessity of revolution to a question of economics. The original sin of anarchism was its voluntarism — its belief that revolutions will occur spontaneously, and its inability to show the revolutionary activist how to catalyze the revolutionary process. It is our belief that a revolutionary situation may well take shape in the next five years, and that none of the old answers are sufficient to guide our activity. What we need is a **politics of everyday life** — a politics which reveals this system's inability to fulfill people's economic needs, but also their moral, intellectual, sensual, aesthetic, and social needs. Until we develop such a politics, revolutionaries will be left rebounding between opposite poles of the same stupidity: Leninists will turn into social-democrats, anarchists will turn into syndicalists, and no one will be presenting a vision which transcends the productivist and consumerist conceptions of socialism that all the various "workers' parties" have been preoccupied with. We cannot offer you an alternative dogma, because we don't pretend to have all the answers. If you would, however, like to be part of building this new synthesis, contact us, and we will learn from each other.

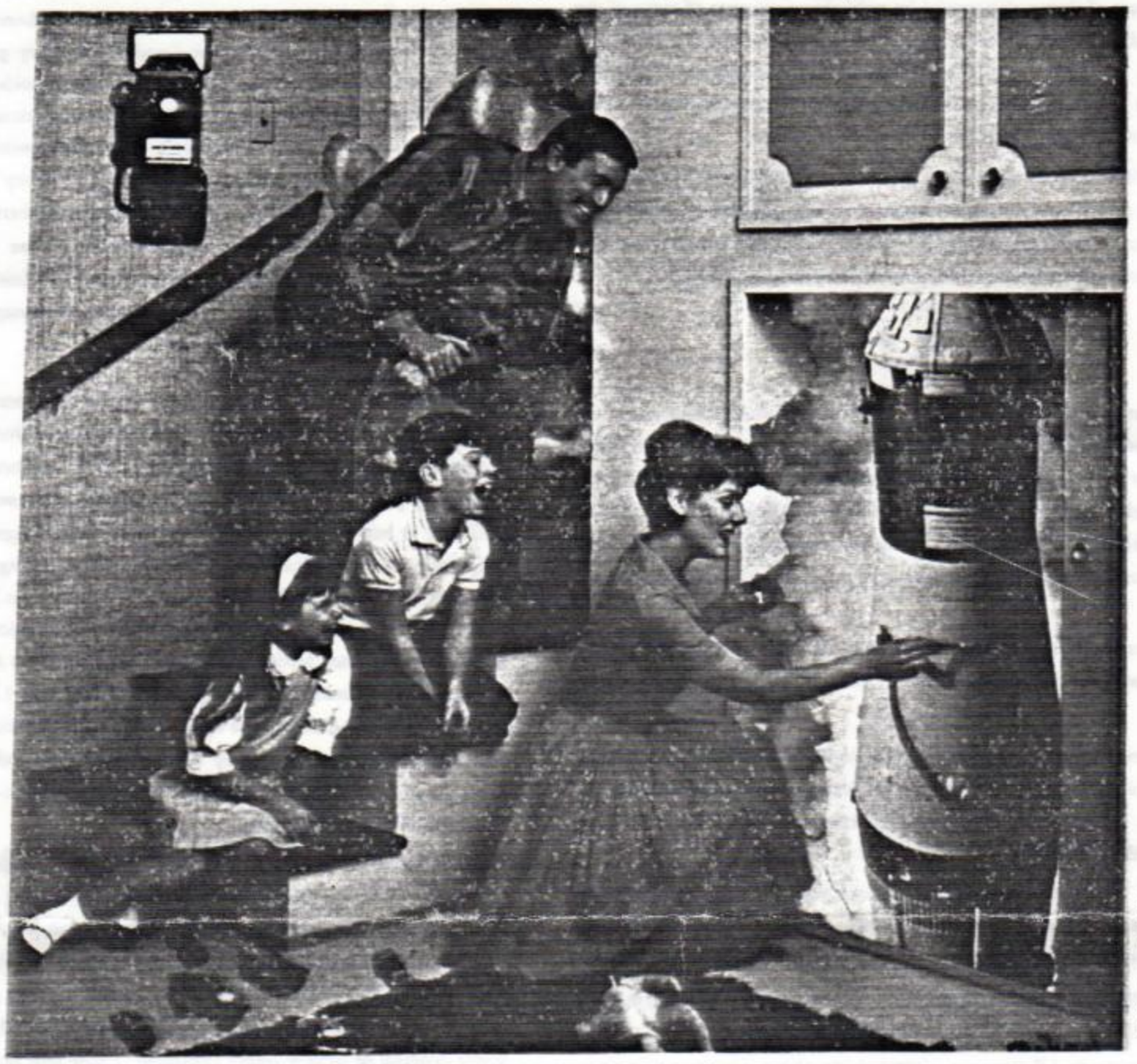
--editorial of **UP FROM THE ASHES**

EPISODE 3 - TROUBLE AT T'MILL
MR. ENGELS, T'LADS WANT ANOTHER PENNY A WEEK...
I'D REALLY LIKE TO HELP, BUT I'M AFRAID MISERY MUST INCREASE-
YOU SEE, IT'S HISTORICALLY INEVITABLE--

EPISODE 4 - THE NEW BOYFRIEND...
DADDY-THIS IS PROSPER--OLIVIER--HE'S A COMMUNARD-WE'RE PLANNING TO GET MARRIED..
BONJOUR
HMM... SOME OF MY BEST FRIENDS ARE REVOLUTIONARIES-.. BUT WOULD YOU LET YOUR DAUGHTER MARRY ONE?..
R.W.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The following letters were among the dozens received by Up From the Ashes *in response to our original call for a journal. We have chosen these as being among the most contentious and thought-provoking. Many of them contain concrete proposals for the future of the journal which, at this point, is very much up for grabs. We wish to take this opportunity to thank all those who took the time to write. Please, let's continue to communicate with one another. Initials have been used to protect people's identity from the political police.*



Richard Slye

Dear Hayley and Moore,

I believe I agree with you. There is a need for a revolutionary anarchist periodical that satisfies the desire for theory some of us might feel. I'm not just sure whether there are enough anarchists who feel such a need, especially given a general anarchist commitment to combat the authority of theory over practice.

In any case, I would be interested in such a project, especially if it would be a forum for in depth analyses of current political events. For such analyses I still have to go to revolutionary internationalist communist periodicals because anarchists seem to ignore international political affairs.

If you get many encouraging responses to your letter in the *Open Road*, please inform me about your moves because I'd like to help out. In case you don't get many responses, you might want to think about getting out a periodical (four or so times a year) that prints good essays from anarchist, feminist, and even revolutionary internationalist communist periodicals, as well as original contributions. Such a journal would be of interest to revolutionary anarchists as well as others, and you wouldn't have to rely on contributions. (The essays should not all come from English language publications, but also be translations.)

I look forward to hearing from you. My name and address is....(For the moment I am an academic — a teacher of philosophy).

In solidarity,

M.L.(Fredonia, New York)

p.s. One minor question: where will the money come from?

Dear Ronald and Joseph,

I saw your letter "up from the ashes" last week in *Root and Branch* #10.

Currently, what plagues me most in my political work is lack of a vision of what things could be like. I have just helped complete the first local newsletter of the Boston Jobs for Peace Campaign and am working on developing a speakers' packet for training purposes and speech preparation.

The purpose of the Boston Jobs for Peace is to provide analysis of the links between military spending, US foreign policy, and the health of the economy. This has been presented to various constituencies such as the Boston Teachers' Union. Referenda are and have been used as successful education tools for applying pressure on elected representaives.

While the group is geared to have less spent on the military and more on human needs, it lacks a vision of how the funds once freed up could help the empowerment of people. The cry "Fund Human Needs!" is not necessarily different from the call for a return to the welfare state, where people perhaps eat better but the essential power dynamic of mass dependence on government and corporations within an increasingly hierarchical context to meet human needs, goes unchanged.

I have started looking slowly at what visions have been created. I am reading *Post-Scarcity narchism, Strategy for a Living Revolution*, the books on *Ecotopia* and looking at a bibliography by James (?) Campen on *Alternative Socialist Visions for America*.

The aims of the journal could help me in my journey to eke out a vision that can inform me in my work.

So... YES, WE NEED SUCH A JOURNAL AND BADLY!

Sincerely,

G.B.(Cambridge, Massachusets)

Hello,

Yes, I think a theoretical publication is a good idea. Of course it should attempt to have as extensiveinclusive a mailing list as possible so as to maximize intellectual (meaning mental — not as in "intellectuals") involvement.

Perhaps two techniques of doing this would be publishing excerpts of some of the most relevant theoretical pieces, in the form of an article, in other journals such as *Open Road,* and *Emancipation, Front Line*, etc. This would broaden the number of people who make contact with the ideas and the theoretical endeavors and also double as an advertisement of sorts for the theoretical journal of which you speak.

The other thing would be to print (as cheaply as possible) an anthology of sorts of the best work at the end of a year or so and send it out to as many people as possible. A theoretical search and exploration is marginally useful if it's only limited to a few subscribers and also distribute the collected ideas in as many ways as possible.

Sincerely,
W.(Ithaca, N.Y.)

Sorry guys, I want community and question the significance of another journal to that project. Shit I think *Black Rose* still comes out of Boston and then there's that thing that comes out of Maryland or somewhere and *Open Road* and *Fifth Estate* and from what little I can tell many connected to both of those (and maybe *Telos* too) share "this dream" but so what? And "responsibility for reshaping the theoretical legacy of the past, and developing a new synthesis, lies with us" smacks of intellectual vanguardism. Who's this us person(s)???

Basically your letter reminds me of Ed ClarkFrank Stevens' push, starting in the *Fifth Estate* in '76-77 and ending in the A.C.F. for a "nonauthoritarian, revolutionary political organization".

You can squawk all you want about the death of leninism, of which I am not so sure (c'mon down to Laney College and I'll find you the leninists before you can find me the anarchists, soc-fems, or independent rev-minded activists) but one thing's for sure: anarchy is not what you'd call thriving.

"Principled struggle" "political unity" "socialismbarbarism" — shit I could end up quoting your whole flyer — these are the same rhetorical phrases which are one of the big reasons why most "people" hate "politics" — including antiauthoritarian politics.

So why am I writing? Because I needed a break from cleaning out my desk and wanted to practice my typing? Partially yes, but I guess I feel a mite isolated and if you ever do get your journal together maybe I'll send you a letter to the editor. You wanted a reply and I know what that's like so here it is.

good luck anyways I think,
J.G.(Oakland, California)

Dear People:

I absolutely agree with your assessment. I am active in the disarmament movement, and have been an activist in the anti-nuke and anti-uranium mining movements as well, all of which overlap and yet have distinctions. I have also been engaging in dialogue and actions with all the various strains you identify (women's movement, anarchists, communists, and autonomistas).

Coalescing this tendency by means of a journal that would "promote principled struggle with the aim of achieving political unity", and, I would add, with the purpose of providing a link between activists facilitating joint actions, even prior to an official organization forming, is desirable, and for lack of another initiative, possible. Although, if there is another such initiative, coordination should be undertaken from the outset to insure the broadest network possible.

Again, I agree with you that at this time, given the international situation, and the current state of the left and the movement(s), such a theoretical and practical project is imperative.

Yours in struggle,
R.H.(Chicago, Illinois)

Gentlemen:

I've read your broadside "Up From the Ashes" distributed (as were several of my pieces) as part of the latest N.A.A.N. mailing. You asked for responses and I'm happy to oblige. Your judgement on Leninism is on the mark: it's not enough to exorciate it as sheer villainy (though if it's not that, what is?) in the manner of the corporate media: we have to see it as a bourgeois ideology whose menace is precisely that it purports to be just the opposite. The demonstration of what capitalism and what is miscalled "communism"have in common, not only in practice but even in theory, has to be pressed home against the united front of bourgeois and bureaucratic ideologues who take turns concealing their common paternity.

On the other hand, in my opinion one of the greatest failings or misdirected efforts of what we may call for convenience "anti-authoritarians" is the preoccupation of too many with exorcising the Marxist spectre. After all, the vast majority of North Americans aren't Marxists anyway, and it would make more sense to explicate the anti-statist and anti-capitalist conditions for realizing their traditional libertarian values in contemporary circumstances than it does to replay the MarxBakunin battle of a century ago. Yet some left libertarians, notably the London Solidarity group, are obsessed with anti-Marxist argumentation. Such people betray their residual loyalty to a leftist milieux they've never really succeeded in leaving. It's a dirty job and somebody has to do it, but a purely reactive politics is ultimately a reactionary politics. Let's keep the **God That Failed** Syndrome under control. If, as you say, "many" anti-authoritarians are disaffected Leninist authoritarians, that is probably a misfortune, for such people may carry over more of their past into the present than they realize. I am thinking of people on the far-right of the far-left like Ed Clark whose anti-Leninist paranoia accompanies a fetishism of organization which is itself Leninist through and through. (Clark, I am told, is an ex-Trotskyist. I can believe it.)

No doubt it is time to move "beyond the fragments" of the old New Left, but I wouldn't take it for granted that because many of these grouplets and causes have a common origin that they necessarily have a common destiny. A something-for--everybody pastiche of pieces is not necessarily the answer: pseudo-pluralist coalition-building is how liberals proceed. Some of these "fragments" are almost certainly so solipsistic or ideologically dead-ended (I am thinking of the ridiculous IWW, the mystical and the WAVP-M varieties of feminism, etc.) as to be part of the problem. Some of the people I encounter with the most radical critiques and revolutionary aspirations bypassed leftism altogether, and they seem to be better off for it. (I didn't, though I never underwent the rigors of any M-L sect.) Leftists tend to be preoccupied with politics: non-leftists, the apolitical and anti-political, deserve better than routine abuse for their "apathy", they need explanations and alternatives thst preserve an aversion for the political which battle-scarred leftist anti-authoritarians ultimately came to conclude was well justified.

As for whether there is need for (yet another) theoretical journal, I don't know, but I have my doubts. Certainly to predetermine the purpose of forming "a nonauthoritarian revolutionary political organization" — I count at least two self-contradictions in that expression — precludes attention to some of the most serious questions we ought to be considering. The possibility (which I doubt) of such an organization, much less its desirability, is anything but axiomatic unless your libertarianism is just the thin sugar-coating of largely intact Leninism. I note that ancient (IWW) and recent (ACF) efforts along these lines came to dismal results and probably alienated more people than they organized, if indeed there's any difference between the two. To start off with such conservative premises is to give up the ground gained by some other publications such as the *5th Estate* (before it confined itself to paleolithic nostalgia and anti-nuclear hysteria), *Dis-Ease, Work and Pay,* etc. The two connected questions before us are, what do we want and what do about it? I submit that assumptions which foreclose or inhibit the following projects are at best useless, and at worst will eventuate in still more "bourgeois ideology":

— Critique of work
—Critique of organization
—Critique of productivism and its offspring, workerism
—Critique of technology
—Critique of moralism

What say?

Against entropy,
B.B.(Berkeley, California)

Dear Comrades,

I recently received a copy of your leaflet 'Up From the Ashes' via the revolutionary socialist-and-feminist group *Big Flame* on whose National Committee I am a delegate. I am writing as an individual rather than as a representative of my organization which is in some chaos at present. There are various conflicting views as to what sort of direction we should be taking, my own being the 'ultra-left' view, based loosely on my understanding of Hegel, Marx, James, Dunayevskaya and Mattick to name but a few. That is to say I believe:

l)Just as parliamentary 'socialism' (the Labour Party), Leninism, Trotskyism and elements of the autonomous movements have been co-opted by capital and patriarchy, so the same is happening to the so-called New Left.

2)Regarding organizations such as my own, this can be attributed to not realizing that as all revolutionary groups exist within capitalism, so they are all infected by bourgeois concepts and organizational forms. This is because the left has to function as a mirror to the developments of capital and patriarchy in order to oppose them. The problem arises in that the oppressive system is well able, indeed needs, to accept reforms in order to counter working class revolt. The only way in which to avoid being co-opted and thus made irrelevant to the struggle for socialism is to carefully follow every single twist and turn of capital and to constantly evolve new programmes and organizational forms — to always be one step ahead of capital.

3)Aided by the moribund, old forms of socialism which linger on as stooges of capital, the latter is attempting to consolidate its power. This consolidation is taking the form of a)an attack on the standard of living of the working class in order to compensate for fall in the rate of profit inherent in the growth in the organic composition of capital; b)this policy is causing frictions within domestic capitalism as it demands an increase in competition and thus an increase in monopolization and a (temporary) fall in the mass of profits as some firms go broke; c)the next move will be towards corporatism whether this is achieved with the stick and the carrot (the latter for union bosses etc.) as in the latest Tory anti-union bill or with just the carrot by the Labour Party in its so-called turn to the left; d)the 'traditional' left has allowed this situation to develop with minimal resistance through its constant assertion that nationalisation alone is a large step towards socialism. This assertion is evident both within the Labour Party since its inception and within Trotskyist 'defense of the workers' state'.

4)Socialism as a concept linked to a political movement no longer exists within the working class because so-called socialists have constantly failed to even attempt to link their political programmes to the private and collective dreams of the working class. The image is of politicos who call for nationalisation and little else on the industrial front, tokenism towards women and ethnic groups and outdated, constantly betrayed rhetoric.

5)The need is for a realignment of the left. The dross of parliamentarianism and leninism must be cut away. A new pole must be created which is clearly and unambiguously separated from both the crimes of the USSR and those of the domestic social democrats. This pole should be flexible organizationally — a network of libertarian communists who are committed to grassroots work relevant to their communities (thus putting revolutionary socialism back in the minds of the working class) and wider national/international agitation and information spreading. This network would allow for separate partygroup organization within the general framework.

There you have a brief account of my position. It may interest you to know that I am hoping to be involved in organizing a conference of libertarian communists on these topics sometime in the next few months (leaflet to Big Flame members, from myself, enclosed).

Regarding your own leaflet, I am extremely interested in it and would certainly like to hear more of what you plan to do. If you get a journal going then I would like to subscribe to it and if you need any contributions from England, then I'll do whatever I can. As it is, I'd be glad to hear from you and I will pass a copy of your leaflet to another socialist organization.

Revolutionary greetings,
T.S.(Essex, England)

Ronald Hayley and Joseph Moore,

The *Call to Arms* pamphlet, with its worship of Marx and its inconsistency in putting down Lenin while using his idea of imperialism, doesn't really deserve an answer, so I won't give it one. All I'll say is that it ain't too damn likely to inspire anyone who doesn't already agree with you to anything.

As to *Up From the Ashes*:

Leninism, the latest form of bourgeois ideology?!? You mean they haven't come up with anything for 65 years? I don't buy that. When I look at the goals of anarcho-syndicalists, council communists, most anarcho-communists (the social democrats of NAM and SOLIDARITY hardly deserve mention), all I see is a desire for the self-management of capital. They don't want to abolish capital, because they still define themselves as workers and to abolish capital is to abolish that alienated activity we call work, the activity by which these people define themselves. If bourgeois means capitalist, then is unquestionably bourgeois ideology.

Because I don't believe that a group of revolutionary specialists are going to, or even possibly could, make a real revolution, I don't see a need for unity with anyone that I feel is offering solutions to capital's problems rather than trying to destroy it. In fact, I think it's more important to make differences clear so that I can find those who really share my goals and avoid the appearance of unity with those goals I find abhorrent.

Finally, a "non-authoritarian revolutionary political organization" is the last thing we need — or I should say, it is not only unneeded, it is a threat to anti-authoritarian struggle. As I told FOCUS in response to some unsolicited material I got from them, at this point, the question of revolutionary organization can be summed up: Can such a thing exist? I say, no. A revolutionary organization is just another savior offered to people to act for them, thus, reinforcing the idea that they can't act for themselves. It is leninism without a charismatic human leader, but it is still a form of leninism.

You can have you "libertarian" leninism and your organization, but it has nothing to do with liberation and I'm not interested in hearing any more about it.

D.V.(San Francisco, California)

Hi,

Got your *Up From the Ashes* leaflet. Sounds good. There are in fact all sorts of libertarian left-minded people around and we are very scattered. I haven't met many antiauthoritarian refugees from Leninism though — I hope you're right about that. I do know that the R.U. and later R.C.P. burned out immense amounts of cadre (is that the group you left?) and that the Maoist movement that was in ascendancy has collapsed, but there are attempts at regroupment among them (under a more pro-Soviet position, electoral work is good, a kind of social-democratic leninism) and there are still plenty of individual leninists around. They have been able to take a lot of prominence in the "movement" (plus the social dems) and we haven't. I'm agreed we need something to bring us together or I fear we'll be irrelevant. Many activists I know don't know what the hell the difference is between an anarchist or a Stalinist or whatever but in their hearts, common sense, and actions, are antiauthoritarian. One big problem I see is a large degree of pacifism among libertarians.

A journal? There are already many around but none I guess that carry the dialogue you want. I don't know if it could work but it may be worth a try. I have seen the same sectarianism, nastyness, ego-tripping and plain disrespect and hatred among libertarians as I've seen among the vanguardists. There may be a core of us who can see our way through the bourgeois way of relating. It's obvious that joint work can be done among varying tendencies. Many of us do joint work in coalitions with leninists, social dems, churches, and other garbage, so why can't we do something in common together?

Have you been in touch with *Midnite Notes*? Let me know. I'll reproduce your leaflet. I'm am activist in anti-nuclear, housing, messenger union organizing stuff.

B.M.(Brooklyn, New York)

Your letter made two immediate impressions on me. The 1st, that such a journal would be a good idea; the 2nd, that there was something about the letter that made me wary. Hence this letter, which will hopefully be of some use. However, my criticisms are based upon speculations as to the reasons for your use of language in certain places, i.e. it may be that I have paid too much attention to style(of which I am often accused).

It seems to be of central importance to your letter that 'Leninism is dead'. This is shown by several points made. You assume that the anti-authoritarian movement is only just beginning. This ignores the entire history of the anarchist movement amongst others (e.g. Situationists in France 1968). A seemingly minor point is that anarchists are of the 'left', either in the 'mainstream'revolutionary political spectrums. Politics can't be reduced to a 2-dimensional diagram.

I think it is very doubtful that the 'tendencies' mentioned are of 1 movement. Rather, they are separate and, more importantly, autonomous movements. However, a coalition could be very useful, especially in terms of dialogue and pooling resources.

You wish to establish a journal that would help towards a revolutionary libertarian alternative. I suggest that you subscribe to Cienfuegos Press, with special reference to the *Anarchist Review*. It may not yet be exactly what you want, but your participation, I'm sure, will be welcome.

My last point is hopefully my most unfounded criticism of all. You seem to suggest that we have a duty to humanity andor history. I would humbly suggest that this is a very dangerous idea as it can lead to horrific results if not kept in check by libertarian principles.

The purpose of these criticisms is to point out (hopefully) that if these criticisms are true, then it would infer that you ascribe to certain positions that may alienate people from your venture. Aside from all of the above, I would be glad to see your venture a success. Such intercourse should be very useful.

With love and best wishes,
T.P.(Devon, U.K.)

Dear Folks,

This letter is to summarize points from my discussion with Ronald Hayley last night....

First, I agree with the main points in the letter — the bourgeois nature of Leninist ideology and therefore its counter-revolutionary nature, the diversity and isolation of the revolutionary groups and individuals in North America (and worldwide) — as, usually, scattered cells and individuals, and the need for theoretical and personal connections amongst these isolated cells and individuals to form a larger revolutionary force for agitation and action.

Now, the points I feel should be considered: 1)it's obviously premature to talk of forming an organization at this point, when discussion amongst these various currents has not begun (the existence already of various "revolutionary anarchist" organizations — the Anarchist Association of the Americas, the I.W.W., the Social Revolutionary Anarchist Federation, the Anarcho-Communist Federation, and I'm sure others — all of them tiny, irrelevant, diversions from activity, shows the stupidity of this rather touching naieve faith in "organizations qua organizations").

And there's the whole question of whether organizations operate to create dogma and hierarchy and greater ideological incoherence under these scattered andor "mass" orientated conditions.

2)The formation of a journal has problems associated with it in the division between producers and consumers of ideology that is fundamental to the nonrevolutionary orientation of current ideologies. Some people become ideological "heroes" and others become their followers, some are "actors" and others spectators —(sound familiar??).

But we must discuss our ideas, our differences and similarities to discover our basis for activity against authority of all sorts, etc. because, although revolution is not a metter of words purely or of intellectuals, it's true that those words and intellectual constructs underly our activity. So, I'd suggest looking to nontraditional forms of discussion, especially the amateur publishing association (apa) form used by the North American Anarchist Network: a central person collates, **without editing**, these submissions together and mails them out to all member groups or individuals. The membership requirements are the requirements to receive the apa — i.e. it's only distributed to members, only to people or groups who contribute and potential contributors who are sent sample copies.

It's not a "mass" journal or newspaper, but more resembles an internal discussion journal except that it's internal to a movement rather than an organization.

Another "form" to consider is just spreading out our skills and encouraging the formation of autonomous groups. I, for example, print leaflets on my mimeograph not just for the Anarchist Black Umbrella, which I am a member of, but also for WAVAW and individuals whose ideas I tend to agree with.

There do seem to be more of us all the time, as honest individuals break with the decaying left, with bourgeois political parties, or the one-issue oriented movements. I hope and expect that we will be able to talk to one another.

yours in a comradely fashion tempered with some cautions (new salutations desperately needed!)

S.M.(Toronto, Ontario)

Dear Comrades,

I would be interested in seeing a copy of your journal when it is available. I am rather doubtful at the prospect of forming a libertarian organization on any **large** scale in the near future, though I think this is an appropiate goal. When the current wave of radicalization recedes, as it will despite anyone's illusions, I would put the chances for the libertarian left having hegemony amongst the left at about 10%. Not very much, but it is necessary to gain such hegemony if each succeeding wave of radicalization won't simply repeat the same dismal story. Perhaps we don't have to have hegemony on the left to be able to build a strong organization, but considering the mind of the average leftist I feel that such hegemony is perhaps the greatest plus factor.

It is a rather satisfying thing to watch various Leninist groups disintegrate. It was particularly (both) surprising and pleasing to see the decay of **In Struggle!** produce what I never thought possible — intelligent Maoists. Be that as it may, however, Leninism was merely the worst of the hangovers from the past. Conditions are so inappropiate for a Leninist party in the developed Western world that one is simply amazed that people could be so out of touch with reality to take it up. What is needed now is a thorough critique of leftism, not this or that organizational form, but the whole subculture of leftism and its interconnection with the domiant culture and other subcultures. This is necessary if leftism is to cease being a subculture and become a political movement of large numbers of people.

Such a critique would eliminate practically all the antique baggage in the Marxist armamentorium — its Hegelian hangover of 'dialectics', a useless (except for justifying whatever opportunistic policies are fashionable at the time) collection of truisms and nonsense, its economistic theory of 'historical materialism', its economics based on a mathematical error in Marx whose only apparent value is to prove the erudition of Marxist academics, and most importantly the whole Marxist schemata of classes which serves to obscure the actual movement of classes in our society. It would explore the sociological reasons for the dilletantism and lack of backbone that prevents the anarchist movement from taking up its natural role as the successor of a decaying Msrxism. A thorough investigation of the role of subcultures in our society might help anarchism in curing of its addiction to see marginals as not just deserving of equal consideration but as actually **THE** revolutionary force (with the typical foolish leftist presumption of the greater virtue of the oppressed). It would especially make a thorough investigation of the class dynamics if the left and its connection to the state.

This last is the reason for general pessimism. An unprejudiced look at two of the factions (anarchists excluded) that you mentioned in your letter to *Open Road* will show that their politics are **overwhelmingly** social democratic. An honest look at the background of the majority on both socialist feminists and non-aligned leftists will show not just dependence on the state for subsistence (bad enough) but also a very large contingent of people whose livelihood depends on the reduction of increasing numbers of marginalized people to the helpless status of social worked 'client'. It will reveal the ability of the state to incorporate almost any protest movement into its own machinery, and thereby reinforce the passivity of the majority while taking so-called leaders into the managerial ruling class.

Sure not all leftists fall into the categories mentioned above, but far too many do. One can expect isolated individuals to break from such a class out of disgust at their role and its incompatibility with their beliefs, but those isolated individuals are easily replaced by others and the hegemony of the dominant class will remain. Besides this the left is bound together by social as well as political ties. People who do not belong to teither the managers or the part of the working class whose only product is marginalized people in the service of the state still have many many leftist friends who do belong to such classes. Is it going to be easy for them to criticize such freinds, let alone struggle against them politically? Take a look at various leftist activity. There is a certain amount — defense of civil liberties, direct action on the job, formation of cooperatives, etc. — that is in fact revolutionary. Most of it, however, concerns demands for the state to spend more money, hore more bureaucrats (presumably of the leftist variety) and their support staff, and provide paternalistic services, thereby reducing political discontent and reinforcing passivity. If we are to form a revolutionary (whatever that word means) alternative we have got a long uphill fight ahead of us. And don't be surprised if many of the people you would presently like to recruit will be denouncing you as reactionary.

This doesn't mean you should give up, lie down and die. Just go into what you are doing with open eyes. **AND** with principles. Don't try to create a ragbag of whatver is fashionable amongst the left at any given time. You seem to have an idea of the problem with the left; I noticed a reference to the social worker mentality in your letter to Open Road. I would be interested in hearing your critique of the general left, if you have such, and seeing if it accords with mine.

I wish you luck on your journal and would be interested in contributing. And I will try to keep my contributions on as constructive a level as possible. Past attempts to do things similar to what you are doing have foundered as people decided to tear after each other on an abstract level about 10 miles up in the ozone (check out the old *Red Menace* published a few years back in Toronto). I am totally willing to work with libertarian Marxists or socialst feminists or whatever no matter what I think of their philosophy (I define myself as an anarchist for want of a better word, even though what I see in many anarchists disturbs me). To be quite frank I don't care much about their basic philosophies. I will **NOT**, however, work with anyone whose idea of **PRACTICAL** socialist work is to increase government power. A well-founded non-statist program has the possibility of uniting a number of trends and organizations, providing (and **ONLY IF**) it concentrates on what they can do **PRACTICALLY** together.

I think such unity is possible if the basis is well thought out, and I wish you success at it. I am not sanguine about its possibilities for influencing large numbers of people in the **near** future, but a realistic long term perspective of decades is one in which I see a lot of potential.

That's about it. Hope to hear from you soon. What ML group did you come out of? I've been an anarchist for over a decade now, but I was a Marxist for five years previous to that. Mostly work in the NDP in my Marxist period though I was peripherally involved in attempts to build local ML sects. I will pass your letter on to various non-anarchist individuals who might be interested — most anarchists will have seen it or your ads elsewhere. Once again good luck.

In Solidarity,

P.M.(Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)

REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY IN THE 80'S

One subject that deserves a lot of discussion is the question of revolutionary strategy. This is an area, in my opinion, in which anarchism historically is very weak. Indeed, as objective conditions sharpen up, there exists the very real danger that the more revolutionary sections of the anarchist movement will be eclipsed by those who advocate terrorism, syndicalism, and, more recently, ''libertarian municipalism''. The time is ripe for exerting an independent pole — for transforming our theoretical ideas into strategy. The following two pieces address the question of strategy, albeit in a somewhat general way. The first, by Jim Campbell of Toronto, was written in response to the **Interview with Comrade A** *which appeared in the last* **Open Road** *(Summer '82). They will be printing parts of it in their upcoming issue, but* **Up From the Ashes** *has chosen to print it in full. The second piece is a brief excerpt from a longer essay I wrote entitled* **What is Anarchist Agitation?** *(in which it is argued that agitation, based on a critique of everyday life, is the* **key** *to revolutionary strategy). This passage constitutes an opening shot against ''libertarian municipalism''.*

—Ronald Hayley

FOR A CULTURAL REVOLUTION

I am writing in response to the *Interview with Comrade A* which appeared in the previous issue of *OR*. I am particularly interested in what she or he referred to as the M & M Syndrome, or the relationship between the mainstream and the margin. I speak primarily from experience, being what has been termed a ''post-marginal'', one who lived for years in the nether-world of job-hopping, state-supported hippy but now find myself in its negation, the 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 industrial service job. As feminist and minority theory predicted, I had little problem cashing in my white, male, privelege cards to get a well-paying union position.

I agree with the Bookchinites that the essential point to keep in mind is that the work place is not a very conducive place for the development of social ecological ideas. I remained counter cultural for so many years because it was possible to have time to think, to love, to enjoy, to work on collective and individual projects unencumbered by the constraints of the 40 hour week. When I did work, I still lived for the margins as Comrade A described. I had little connection with the other workers and certainly had no interest in bettering working conditions through institutional changes since I was primarily interested in quitting.

Now that I'm working fulltime, it takes self-discipline and initiative to come home with enough energy to create my own life after so much time and energy has gone for the use of others. In other words, I don't live for the margins so much as I simply try to maintain some sense of self. This for me is the crucial question for us as workers, ''How is it possible to develop our own culture, an alternative culture as it were, which will give us a basis for critiquing work and consumption?'' Without this critical psychic separation between ourselves and work, apathy, alienation and cynicism, will overwhelmingly be the response that work engenders.

Comrade A ignores one fundamental aspect of working class life in North America. It is not only the marginals who live for a ''subjective'' existence while they work. Rather virtually everyone has some place to go for psychical and physical comfort which allows them to transcend the monotony of work. The difference between a politicized marginal (and we should remember that few marginals are, in fact, political) putting in their eight hours and then going home to commune, dope, political meetings, or even direct action, and another worker who goes home to spouse, kids, TV, beer, and Friday night shopping is a difference in content but not in form. Personal meaning, personal definition, is drawn from non-work sources.

In general, the corporation or government bureaucracy doesn't care what the ''headspace'' of the worker is so long as that person sticks witrh the demands of the job. The fundamental reason for a lack of political process in the work place is rooted in the very alienation that we have from work rather than in the fact that the marginals do not understand their objective position as workers. Comrade A does touch upon issues that are important within the context of the work place: wage differentials, health and safety, working hours and holidays. These cannot simply be left up to management. It is important to fight for our needs within this context. But I'm not convinced that the union is the most effective means to put forth our challenge. If we had passion, if we had a collective vibrancy both on the job and in our communities, then the dead time that was imposed on us by work would not only become apparent, but it would also be intolerable. Collective social and political action would flower simply because the social constraints would not longer be sufficient to hold us back. I would not deny that the counter-culture of a few years ago has been thoroughly integrated or made irrelevant. But, on the other hand, no one can deny that North American life was fundamentally altered by the impact of the various social movements: women, ecological, gay, sexual, etc. that were rooted in those years. That these movements were so completely recuperated is a reflection of the extent to which they were a threat to the broader society. Bourgeois society transforms itself in order to render these social ideas and actions harmless. The point is not to fetishize the late, lamented ''counter-culture'', but to draw upon these lessons to understand that institutional political action such as Comrade A advocates struggling for will go nowhere unless it is situated within a much broader social critique.

The point is that we, as anarchists, are seeking cultural revolution rather than industrial democracy, understanding culture at its widest as affecting fundamental human relations. This is both process and product, connecting how we work as well as how we live. If the whole context of social relations is being challenged and re-invented, then work relations could not be left unaffected. On the other hand, we could move closer towards ''industrial democracy'' without changing our basic alienation from ourselves, from each other, from the natural world.

Now, I realize that Comrade A would probably consider the call for a cultural revolution within the workplace as being rather abstract. It is. I'm not at all sure how we as a small network of self-styled anarchists can help to initiate cultural change. I don't think that doing grass roots on-the-job politics is particularly going in that direction, though it is not necessarily a diversion either. I used to be a strong advocate of the so-called ''struggle against work'' which takes as significant the sabotage, the drinking, the little ways in which workers try to reclaim control over their part in production. I've got nothing against these practices and certainly have my own means of looking after my own interests. But it is difficult for me to see that someone who ''slowsdown'' simply because they're too drunk to walk is at the cutting edge of struggle in the work place.

So I must leave with my subjective existence as a thinking, sensual, desirous being, still in contradiction with my objective existence as a ''worker''. I will support anything that seems to broaden my subjective possibilities. To be reduced to an empty category as a producer would be a fate worse than any I could imagine. I'll take anything that the union and its militants can offer me, but I'll probably not put much effort into helping to bring it about. The union doesn't do much for me. I don't do much for it.

As it stands now, I'm sure that both Comrade A and myself thrive on any display of collective action in dealing with particular irritants such as obnoxious foremen, or a health and safety issue that momentarily overcomes the splits along ethnic, cultural, sexual and personal differences that permeate the workplace. The one source of hope that remains is that humans are unpredictable and spontaneous. No matter how sophisticated the institutional structures that are set up, those of us who are forced to live within these structures will always be subverting the authoritarian intent of these structures. Time is reclaimed for own purpose, work will be done in our own style, affection and affirmation will be displayed. Workplace politics will be revolutionary so long as such actions animate people rather than breathing life into institutions.

AGITATORS VS. ORGANIZERS

In addition to identifying the enemy, we also need to identify all "liberatory tendencies" in the present (as manifested in people's attitudes, values, and actions) which seek to break through the prison of alienated production and consumption, the dictatorship of gender, and the dependence of people on the state. But we should not make the potential mistake of identifying these tendencies with any specifically existing **institutions** (for example: the movement for town meetings and local control). The power of the system to recuperate any and all institutions is enormous, and to single out specific institutions is not only to run the risk of contributing to the co-optation of the revolutionary movement, but also to narrow down the scope of what can be related to agitated around. Genuine revolutionary institutions will emerge and will be the product of the people themselves when the conditions are ripe. They are not, as yet, in my opinion, ripe.

For example, in "No Class!" (an otherwise excellent statement of anarcho-communist principles in the No. 2-3 issue of *Black and Green*), we find the following questionable statement:

"A narrow emphasis on labor and production have prevented Marxists and syndicalists alike from developing a strategy for human liberation that breaks with the oppressive development of capitalism....for these reasons...we have chosen to concentrate upon the community rather than the workplace as an arena for consciousness-raising and political activity....we embrace the community as possibly the only arena in which our natural impulses toward cooperation and mutual aid continue to appear despite the dehumanizing influences of the culture of rationalized production and consumption."

This smacks as much of formula-ism as does "A narrow emphasis on labor and production". Liberatory tendencies are not bounded by time and space. They exist in a variety of forms — in people's minds, in their emotions, in their cultural sensibilities. Was punk strictly a "community" phenomenon? Obviously not. Would it be ignored on that account? What about sexual rebellion? Cultural and intellectual manifestations of rebellion are everywhere — and nowhere. We need to relate to them as they exist, and not reduce them to a ready-made formula. This relates to an important dividing-line question for revolutionaries. Are we organizers or agitators? Those who stress our role as organizers invariably seek to identify concrete institutions and movements as **the** building blocks of revolution. Agitators relate to any and all manifestations of rebellion **in everyday life**, and do not presume that any specific manifestation will necessarily be able to stabilize itself. Your so-called community has no more authenticity as breeding-ground for revolution that does the factory. Both have been severed from their revolutionary traditions.

HOW IS ANARCHISM OBSOLETE?
Pat Murtagh Replies to Murray Bookchin

The following article was submitted in response to excerpts from The Ecology of Freedom *published last issue under the title of* "Is Anarchism Obsolete?". *Those wishing to respond may write to Pat Murtagh, Box 7702, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, or to* Up From the Ashes.

The excerpt from Murray Bookchin in the first issue of Up From the Ashes raises some important points concerning the applicability of anarchism to modern conditions. Murray may be aware that Proudhon was in fact the originator of the term "scientific socialism" and that Marx, in fact, borrowed this expression from him. What he seems unaware of, however, is the historical meaning of the term in the time and place where Marx and Proudhon wrote. Proudhon called his socialism "scientific" because he believed that the combination of political economy with the metaphysics of the Hegelian dialectic produced a method of prediction and analysis superior to the scientific method of empiricism, that method which is commonly thought of as scientific today. In the mid-1800's the disciples of Hegel had so befuddled many people that science had a far broader meaning than it has today. It encompassed their own corpus of speculative thought, not only the empirical sciences of today. There are literally dozens of places in Marx (and Proudhon) where it is stated quite plainly that the "science" on which they base their socialism is Hegel's dialectics, not science as we know it today. When Murray talks about the "scientism" or "economic determinism" of Marx or Proudhon in the same breath as their (mistaken) claims to a "scientific" socialism he is confusing matters. One who was a cynic might say that this is because he himself is, in fact, a Hegelian, as the final chapter/epilogue of The Ecology of Freedom makes quite plain. One of the major, perhaps **THE** major, problem with Marx's economic determinism is not the fact that it is economic but the fact that it is determinism. The determinism of Marx's thought derives directly from his Hegelian background, not from any empirical scientific study of the economy. When Murray attempts to glorify "teleological thinking" in his book, no amount of waffling can disguise the fact that he advocates that we look on the explanation of a thing as **determined** by some presumed "final purpose". This Hegelianism is, unfortunately, the seed of almost all of the authoritarian apologetics for which Marxism has been used. For those who would like a more complete account of the matter I would recommend Kolakowski's Main Currents of Marxism, Volume 1.

Another place where Murray plays fast and loose with historical fact is his mention of Malatesta's critique of Bakunin and Kropotkin. What Malatesta criticized in Bakunin and Kropotkin was a determinism based, in the case of Bakunin, on an acceptance of Marx's Hegelian metaphysics and in Kropotkin's case on an acceptance of 19th century materialism that modern science has outgrown. If I may quote from Malatetsa's article in *Pensiero e Volunta* commemorating the 50th anniversary of Bakunin's death, "Today I find that Bakunin was, in his political economy and in his interpretation of history, too Marxist; I find that his philosophy was trapped, with no possibility of escape, in the contradiction between the mechanical conception of the universe and faith in the power of the will over the destiny of the individual and humanity" (from first complete English translation, 1976, Regina Anarchist Group). Similarly he criticized Kropotkin in *Pietro Kropotkin: Ricordi e Criche di un suo Vecchio Amico (Studi Sociali*, 15 Aprile, 1931) because, "Kropotkin, then, while he was greatly severe with the fatalism of the Marxists, fell himself into a mechanical fatalism in which he remained pretty much paralyzed" (translation my own). What Malatesta was, in fact, arguing for in these and other passages was a philosophy of "will" and indeterminacy, not an attack against science or "scientism". He praised Kropotkin for his scientific work in the article mentioned. From the standpoint of Malatesta, whatever he might have thought of Kropotkin, Bookchin's attempt to rehabilitate a philosophical determinism would have been an abomination with **EVEN LESS JUSTIFICATION** than any "scientism".

Be that as it may, there remains the question of whether Bookchin's criticism of the 19th century anarchists for "economism" is correct. This question is, in fact, entirely separate from Murray's rather doubtful and antique philosophy — a Hegelianism that is almost certainly one of the things that is "obsolete" among the baggage we have inherited from the past. To answer this question I think we have to go back to basics and ask the question: "What is anarchism?". In my mind anarchism is not a self-contained set of descriptive propositions buffered by a set of arbitrary philosophical rules. It is not, in other words, an ideology. There are many different anarchist ideologies, ranging from Tolstoyan Christianity to neo-Paganism, from an ultra-rationalist anarcho-capitalism to the mindless nihilism of various terrorist groups (we now have Canadian examples unfortunately), from an austere and traditional anarcho-syndicalism to an "eco-anarchism" that often shades into mere cultism, from an individualism of virginal purity to the most demanding of collectivisms, from anarcha-feminism to the militarist posturings of the "ultra-revolutionary" proponents of "armed struggle now", from those who are merely non-state Marxists to the most determined of voluntarists and so on through a whole rainbow of differences. The uniting factor is not a set of ideological propositions but rather a **mood**, an ethical choice for freedom and diversity. Of course anarchist ideas will change and change dramatically, and there will be a bewildering variety of anarchisms at any one time and place, for what matters in anarchism is **not** this or that philosophical idea but rather a much deeper existential or biological fact.

Much of the anarchism of the last century is, of course, obsolete. This is particularly true where anarchism tends to shade into Marxism, as many anarchists of the past merely adopted Marxist economics and philosophy and gave it an anti-state twist. Murray is probably right in his contention that the facts of the economy and the class system are not as important relatively as they were in the time of the classical anarchists — notably in areas such as North America. He is also right that any modern anarchism has to address a far wider range of areas of day-to-day life than classical anarchism did. Muuray, however, despite his admiration for the Greeks, has never learned the importance of moderation and balance. While works such as **The Ecology of Freedom** may indeed be valuable and fated, in fact, to become classics themselves, they have glaring deficiencies.

To begin with the obvious, it may be a mortal sin to cling to an antique syndicalism 50 years out of date, but it is also at least a venal sin to cling to a "subcultural" anarchism a decade out of date. I do not accuse Bookchin of the naievete of some of his followers, but the ghoulish rituals whereby some individuals attempt to animate the corpse of the "counter culture" with justification from his writings is nothing but frightening. There are those amongst us who are apparently incapable of distinguishing life from death. It should also be obvious, in the year of Our Lord 1983 — in the middle of a depression — that we do have to pay at least **some** attention to economics and the class system. If for no other reason than not to be embarassed by appearing utterly silly to the vast majority of the population. The important part is the word "balance", a balance which perhaps the more traditional syndicalists who Murray polemicizes against haven't found **BUT** also a balance which neither Murray nor (especially) his followers have found either.

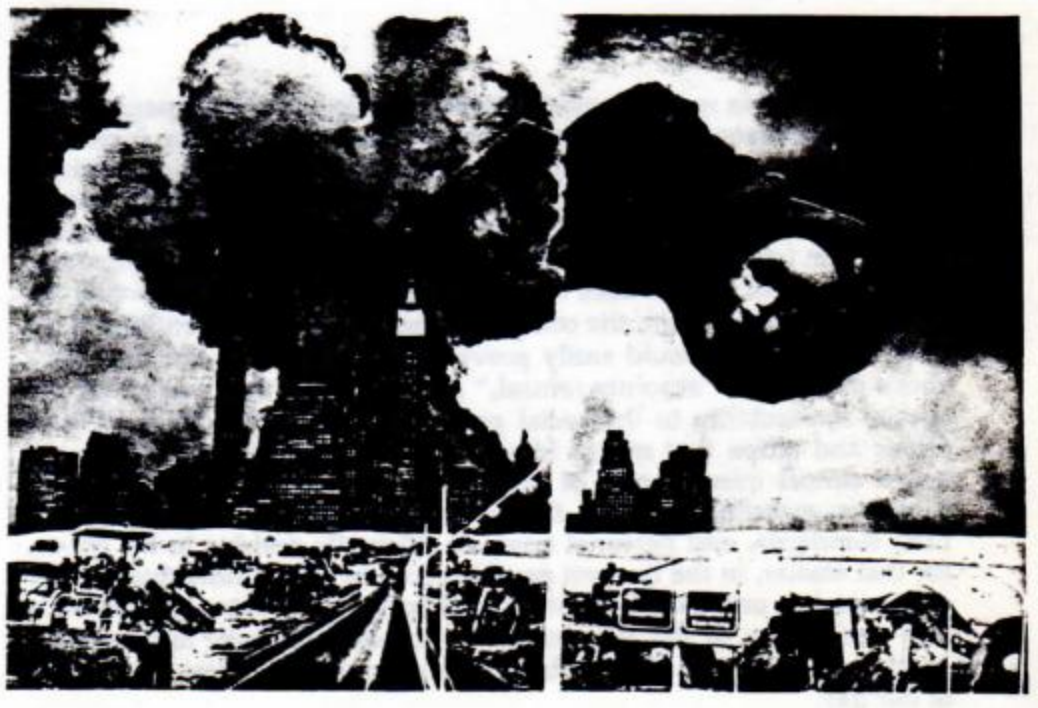
Another problem is the simple fact that the world is bound together. It is not a set of independent subsystems, each rambling on its merry way with no contact with the other, one system named "economics", another "politics", another "sexuality" and so on. This is, of course, something of a cliche in left-wing circles, and Murray is certainly well aware of it. **The Ecology of Freedom** is a brilliant attempt to delineate the facts of history in terms of changes in whole systems, a "systems analysis" approach, in fact, however much Muuray and others might find that word distasteful. The problem is, however, that something seems to short-circuit as we approach our own time. All of a sudden the entire political and economic system is cast out the window, to be replaced by a set of "cultural" conditions for revolution. The problem is, however, that the situation in which these cultural concerns have developed importance is **partly** a situation of politics and economics. A refusal to examine what is unique about this aspect of our situation leads to either a blatantly simplistic view of the world or to a "Mulligan's stew" politics in which a dusty backroom of Marxist economics is left as the foundation of the house while the occupants start adding on new and fashionable annexes in a ramshackle fashion. Part of what is **really** obsolete is left standing instead of being examined and criticized. The false economics of Marxism is not superceded; it is merely ignored. And if left ignored it will return with a vengeance some day.

The problems with which this deliberate blindness saddle one can be seen in Bookchin's attempts to deal with what he calls "managerial radicalism". The rise of lifestyle issues on the radical agenda is intimately bound up with the change from capitalism to a managerial society. Likewise the left, and all its works, cannot be understood outside this change. An intelligent analysis of what happens to various protest movements in our society has to look at this aspect of class **IN A DISPASSIONATE ANALYSIS**. The problem with Murray is that, after years of denouncing the labour movement (probably rightfully) as "integrated" into the system, he belatedly discovers the fact that various "cultural" issues are undergoing a similar process. He should, I suppose, be congratulated as too many of his followers haven't even got to this point. Instead of, however, carefully looking into the process of this integration, he comes out swinging with denunciations of "betrayal". The final product (see his *Open Letter to the Ecology Movement* in **Toward An Ecological Society**) has all the substance of Trotsky complaining about the "betrayal" of the Russian Revolution (I do not intend to compare them on other matters, however).

Bookchin has, thus, made an obviously valuable contribution to the "updating" of anarchism. He has, however, failed to find the proper balance in which this new understanding should be situated. This is even true for the audience of North Americans and Europeans for which he writes. One shudders at the attempt to apply his ideas to poorer countries — for make no mistake about it — there are national roads to anarchism just as there are different anarchisma for different personalities. What the **modest** goal of libertarians should be is to construct a set of descriptions and tactics based on the reality of the area in which they live and on the underlying mood of anarchism (which is anarchism's only true reality) that are **useful**, i.e. that can attract large numbers of people in the future and that can be practiced in a realistic fashion. What I am arguing for is a pragmatic anarchism, an experimental and empirical approach.

"Workersism" and "economism" are easy targets. These often function very much as straw-men. As a matter of fact, even the majority of Marxists in the West are slowly heaping a mountain of abuse on classical Marxism's "economism". I can also assure the most adamant of "lifestylists" that even the most traditional of anarcho-syndicalists are far less tied to an "economic" explanation of the world than their polemical opponents would paint them as being. When the New Left of the 60's began to founder on the rocky shoals of Leninism, a criticism of "economism" and "workeritis" was indeed the most appropiate response. Today, however, there are far more serious deficiencies in leftist thought, not the least of which is a tendency towards "drift", a catching of whatever happens to be uppermost in the headlines of the time as **THE** most important issue. Much like a person adrift on the sea catching at driftwood. A useful and modern anarchism is most certainly not a mere mixture of whatever is closest to the surface of the left at this time. It involves a complete rethink, **NOT** a mere gluing together of separate parts.

In conclusion, then, I am in agreement with the proposition that much of the theoretical baggage of traditional anarchism is obsolete. I do, however, feel that this is very much irrelevant for anarchism in general. I feel that Bookchin and others have made a very important contribution to constructing a useful set of modern anarchist tools. Their work, however, is deeply flawed and not just for the few reasons I have outlined here. It is to be hoped that the project begun by **Up From the Ashes** will prosper, as it appears to be doing, and will not degenerate into a mere "alternative" dogmatism.



BOOKCHIN ON FOURIER
(excerpts from The Ecology of Freedom)

The following are excerpts from Murray Bookchin's The Ecology of Freedom, *published by Cheshire Books, Palo Alto, California. In some ways, Fourier makes a more sensible starting point for an authentic "socialist" tradition than Marx. Fourier, like Susan Griffin more recently, recognized that the suffering of humanity stemmed not simply from capitalism but from* civilization, *founded as it is on an age-old split between culture and nature, and the domination of the latter by the former. Fourier had a far more all-sided understanding of the nature of human needs, and rather than advancing the Productive Forces or advancing Objective Truth, Fourier saw the goal of revolution as quite simple: the creation of happiness and pleasure in everyday life. All this notwithstanding, more attention should be given to Fourier's negative aspects: to his almost Skinnerian vision of humans happily playing their part in a scenario designed and run by social engineer "geniuses", and his belief that humans have an innate need to objectify, and fantasize about, one another. What about people learning to relate to one another as they really* are*?*

In the early nineteenth century, Rabelais and de Sade enjoyed a brief Indian summer in Charles Fourier's utopian visions, which have received worldwide attention as a seemingly practical system for initiating a "socialist" society. Fourier has been widely heralded for his stunning originality and fertile imagination—but often for the wrong reasons. Despite his vigorous denunciations of liberalism's hypocrisies, he was not a socialist; hence, he was no "precursor" of Marx or Proudhon. Nor was he an egalitarian in the sense that his utopia presumed a radical levelling of the rights and privileges enjoyed by the wealthy. To the extent that such a levelling would occur, it was the work his utopia might hope to achieve gradually, in the fullness of time. Fourier was a rationalist who detested the rationalization of life in bourgeois society; therefore it is a grave error (and one made by many of his critics) to accuse him of "antirationalism." Despite his admiration for Newton's mechanical system, his own system yields such a cosmic world of "passionate" intercourse that to regard him as a social "mechanist" (another criticism that has been voiced against him) is simply preposterous.

To be sure, the contradictions in Fourier's "Harmonian" future, which he contrasted with the degrading state of "Civilization," are legion. Women are to be totally liberated from all patriarchal constraints, but this does not prevent Fourier from viewing them as sexual performers—each of whom will cook, later entertain his communities, or *phalansteries*, in singing and other delightful virtuosities, and, in accordance with their feminine proclivities, satisfy the sexual needs of several males. Nonviolent and playful wars will occur in Harmony, and captives, held for several days at most, will be obliged to obey their captors even in performing sexual tasks that may be onerous to them. Secret infidelities will be punished in much the same way. Despite Fourier's basic detestation of authority, however, he toyed with the notion of a world leader at the summit of his vague functional hierarchy, a position he variously offered to Napoleon and Tsar Alexander I.

Yet when such contradictions are placed in the larger perspective of his entire work, Fourier turns out to be the most libertarian, the most original, and certainly the most relevant utopian thinker of his day, if not of the entire tradition. As Mark Poster observes in an excellent review of his work,

> Stamped as a utopian by the pope of socialist orthodoxy [Marx], it has been Fourier's misfortune to be misunderstood by generation after generation of scholars. Seen in his own terms, in the context of his own intellectual problematic, Fourier emerges as a brilliant pioneer of questions that have not been fully examined until the twentieth century. The fate of the passions in bourgeois society, the limitations of the nuclear family, the prospects of communal education, the types of love relations in industrial society, the possibility of attractive labor, the nature of groups and the role of sex in the formation of groups, the dehumanization of market relations, the effects of psychic frustration, the possibility of a non-repressive society—all of these questions, which were dropped by the socialist tradition and never even raised by liberalism have only recently been resurrected from the oblivion fated for all questions relating merely to the "superstructure."

More so than most utopian writers, Fourier left behind pages upon pages of elaborate descriptions of his new Harmonian society, including the most mundane details of everyday life in a phalanstery. His critique of "civilization," notably of capitalism, was utterly devastating; indeed, it is largely for his critical writings that he earned the greatest amount of praise from later socialist writers. But such a one-sided, rather patronizing treatment of Fourier does him a grave injustice. He was above all the advocate of *l'ecart absolu*, the complete rejection of the conventions of his time. *L'ecart absolu* could easily provide a substitute for Maurice Blanchot's plea for an "absolute refusal," an expression that was to acquire special applicability to the social protest voiced by the 1960s. With a fervor and scope that makes him uniquely contemporary, Fourier rejected almost every aspect of the social world in which he lived—its economy, morality, sexuality, family structure, educational system, cultural standards, and personal relations. Virtually nothing in his era or, for that matter, in the deepest psychic recesses of the individuals of his day, was left untouched by his critical scalpel. He even formulated a new conception of the universe that, however fantastic and extravagantly imaginative, is likely to be congenial to the ecological sensibilities of our day.

To Fourier, the physical world is governed not by Newton's law of universal gravitation but by his own "law of passionate attraction"—a law that he exuberantly proclaimed as his greatest contribution to modern knowledge. In place of Newton's mechanical interpretation of the universe, Fourier advances a concept of the cosmos as a vast organism that is suffused by life and growth. A vibrant vitalism so completely replaces the despiritized matter of conventional physics that even the idea of planets copulating is not implausible. Life, as we normally conceive it, and society are merely the offspring of a progressive elaboration of the passions. Fourier, to be sure, is not unique in conceiving of the universe in biological terms. But in contrast to most vitalists, he carries his "law of passionate attraction" from the stars into humanity's innermost psychic recesses.

"Civilization"—the third in seventeen ascending stages that Fourier charts out as humanity's destiny—is perhaps the most psychically repressive phase of all, a phase that brutally distorts the passions and channels them into perverted and destructive forms. The brutalities of the new industrial society, which Fourier recounted with the most powerful prose at his command, are essentially the expression of "civilization's" highly repressive psychic apparatus. Harmony, the culminating stage of society's development, will be marked by the predominance of entirely new social institutions—notably, the phalanstery—that will not only dismantle "civilization's" repressive apparatus but finally provide individuals with the full release of their passions and the full satisfaction of their desires.

Despite the inconsistencies that mar his discussions of women, Fourier was perhaps the most explicit opponent of patriarchalism in the "utopian" tradition. It was he, not Marx, who penned the famous maxim that social progress can be judged by the way a society treats its women. When viewed against the background of the utopian tradition as a whole, with its strong emphasis on paternal authority, this maxim would be enough to single out Fourier as one of the most radical thinkers of his time. But he also distinguished himself from radical social theorists on issues that vex us to this very day. In contrast to the Jacobin creed of republican virtue, he totally rejected an ethic of self-denial, of reason's absolute supremacy over passion, of moderation of desire and restriction of pleasure. Unlike Marx, he denied that work must necessarily be taxing and inherently oppressive. In contrast to Freud, he measured societal advances not in terms of the extent to which eroticism is sublimated into other activities but the extent to which it is released and given full expression. In the Harmonian world, the psychic repressions created by "civilization" will finally be replaced by a full flowering of passion, pleasure, luxury, love, personal release, and joyous work. The "realm of necessity"—the realm of toil and renunciation—will be suffused by the "realm of freedom." Work, however attenuated its role may be in a socialist society, will be transformed from an onerous activity into play. Nature, wounded and perverted by "civilization," will become bountiful and yield abundant harvests for all to enjoy. Indeed, as in the land of Cokaygne, even the salinity of the oceans will give way to a fruit-like, drinkable fluid, and orchards, planted everywhere by Harmonian humanity, will provide a plentitude of fruits and nuts. Monogamy will yield to uninhibited sexual freedom; happiness to pleasure; scarcity to abundance; boredom to a dazzling variety of experiences; dulled senses to a new acuity of vision, hearing, and taste; and competition to highly variegated associations at all levels of personal and social life.

In essence Fourier rehabilitates Rabelais' Abbey of Theleme with his concept of the phalanstery, but his community is to be the shared destiny of humanity rather than of a well-bred elite. Unlike the land of Cokaygne, however, Fourier did not rely on nature alone to provide this material bounty. Abundance, indeed luxury, will be available for all to enjoy because technological development will have removed the economic basis for scarcity and coercion. Work will be rotated, eliminating monotony and one-sidedness in productive activity, because technology will have simplified many physical tasks. Competition, in turn, will be curtailed because the scramble for scarce goods will become meaningless in an affluent society. The phalanstery will be neither a rural village nor a congested city, but rather a balanced community combining the virtues of both. At its full complement, it will contain 1,700 to 1,800 people—which, to Fourier, not only allows for human scale but brings people together in precisely the correct number of "passionate combinations" that are necessary to satisfy each individual's desires.

Fourier, however, stood on a much more advanced and complex social level than Rabelais and de Sade. The monk and the marquis es-

sentially cloistered their views in specific environments. But Fourier boldly stepped up on the social stage for all to see. He furnished it not only with his own presence and his imaginative "license" but also with a fully equipped phalanstery and its luxurious bedrooms, arcades, greenhouses, and work places. His vehicle was not the picaresque novel of the Renaissance or the exotic dialogue of the Enlightenment, but the newspaper article, the treatise, the oral as well as written attack upon injustice, and the compelling pleas for freedom. He was an activist as well as a theorist, a practitioner as well as a visionary.

Fourier's notion of freedom is the most expansive we have yet encountered in the history of liberatory ideals. Even Suso, the Free Spirit, and the Adamites seem lesser in scope, for theirs is still the elitist utopia of Rabelais. They are more like Christian orders than a society, an association of the elect rather than a community for all. Far more than Marx, Fourier linked the destiny of social freedom inextricably with personal freedom: the removal of repression in society must take place concurrently with the removal of repression in the human psyche. Accordingly, there can be no hope of liberating society without self-liberation in the fullest meaning of selfhood, of the ego and all its claims.

Finally, Fourier is in many ways the earliest social ecologist to surface in radical thought. I refer not only to his views of nature but also to his vision of society. His phalanstery can rightly be regarded as a social ecosystem in its explicit endeavor to promote unity in diversity. Fourier painstakingly itemized and analyzed all the possible passions that must find expression within its walls. Although this has been grossly misread as such, it was no pedantic exercise on Fourier's part, however much one may disagree with his conclusions. Fourier seems to have had his own notion of the equality of unequals; the phalanstery must try to compensate in psychic wealth and variety for any inequalities of material wealth existing among its members. Whether its members are well-to-do or not, they all share in the best of wines, the greatest of culinary, sexual, and scholarly pleasures, and the widest conceivable diversity of stimuli. Hence, quantitative variations of income within the community become irrelevant in a feast of diversified, qualitatively superb delights.

For Fourier, an emphasis on variety and complexity was also a matter of principle, a methodological and social critique he leveled at the mechanical outlook of the eighteenth century. The *philosophes* of the French Enlightenment and the Jacobins who followed them "had eulogized sacred simplicity and a mechanical order in which all the parts were virtually interchangeable," observes Frank Manuel in his excellent essay on Fourier. "Fourier rejected the simple as false and evil, and insisted on complexity, variety, contrast, multiplicity." His emphasis on complexity applied not only to the structure of society but also to his assessment of the psyche's own needs. "Fourier's psychology was founded on the premise that in plurality and complexity there was salvation and happiness," Manuel adds; "in multiplicity there was freedom." This is not psychic or social "pluralism" but an intuitive ecological sense of wholeness. What Fourier patently sought was stability through variety and, by virtue of that stability, the freedom to choose and to will—in short, freedom through multiplicity.

CALL FOR A DEBATE ON *"PORNOGRAPHY AND SILENCE"*

Pornography and Silence is published by Harper and Row (1981). People might also want to take a look at "Must We Burn Sade?" by Simone de Beauvoir in *Marquis de Sade* (Evergreen Press, 1953).

For the last several months, I have been following the debate in the women's movement over pornography and s/m with interest and concern. Throughout this time, I have been searching high and low for material to print in *Up From the Ashes* that synthesized the best aspects of both points of view and avoided and critiqued their respective fallacies. Regrettably, I have found no such material. At one point, I was tempted to print something I myself had written on the subject, but, after reading *Pornography and Silence* by Susan Griffin, I felt that many of my arguments against the anti-pornography forces were too facile. What disturbs me is the lack of intellectual honesty on either side. For instance, critics of anti-pornography feminists are constantly making reference to their allegedly anti-sex attitudes and male-bashing, but, in so doing, they offer virtually no evidence to back this up. To take just one example: in a recent issue of *NOW* magazine, Toronto film critic accuses those who have been active in exposing the women--degrading porn of pay-TV as having "jump(ed) into bed with the moral majority"(implying that to be against degrading porn is to be against sex). On the same page, Susan Cole (presumably one of the people he is describing) makes quite clear that what she would like to see in place of "hate propaganda" is "couples fucking....a little late night erotic entertainment...sexual content handled with wit....And let's regulate equal time to the male body in these movies. Off with the jockey shorts gentlemen. And some frontal nudity, please."

One book in the anti-pornography forces' repetoire which is not simplistic, and which does not attribute male sexual violence against women to an x chromosome, is Susan Griffin's *Pornography and Silence*. Griffin makes clear that men and women at bottom share the same human nature and that men's mysogynistic sexual behavior can be attributed not to some innate depravity, but to the deep-going split in our civilization between culture and nature. This analysis (and her unique and powerful contributions to it) puts her squarely in the tradition of Fourier, Reich, Marcuse, and Bookchin, and, as such, it is my belief that her theory (as distinct from her **opinions**, which are unknown to me) can be used to construct a **third pole** on the question which rejects the existing poles as one-sided and simplistic. Such a third pole cannot be culled **exclusively** from Griffin's book (and I have some further thoughts on its elaboration which I would like to share with comrades at a future date), but, for now, I think it's an excellent way to ground further discussion in the pros and cons of **specific arguments** (rather than those attributed to imaginary opponents). Other important materials are the diary of the Barnard Conference on Feminist Sexuality, Women Against Pornography's *Against Sado-Masochism*, Kathleen Barry's speech at a recent conference of rape crisis workers, and *Heresies* #12 (The Sex Issue). I regret that I cannot offer specific citations. For more detailed information on sources, contact *Up From the Ashes*' co-editor

Jay Moore
P.O. Box 9233
South Burlington, Vermont
U.S.A. 05401

EDITOR'S NOTE

Anyone interested in editing future issues of *Up From the Ashes* should contact Ronald Hayley, P.O. Box 5811, Station A, Toronto, Ontario, M6W 1P2. Single issues are $1.00 each(includes postage). Subcriptions are $5.00 for six issues. Leave name part on the cheques blank, or else make them payable to Joseph Moore. Thank you. Those of you who have not yet sent me any money, I would appreciate a donation to cover my costs.

One final note: for an exemplary analysis of the Middle East conflict, see the fall issue of *The Fifth Estate*. This excellent source of libertarian theory and analysis should be read and distributed as broadly as possible. Contact *The Fifth Estate* by writing to F.E., 4403 Second Ave., Detroit, Michigan, 48201. Subs are $5.00 a year American ($7.00 a year foreign, includes Canada). People interested in receiving a copy of the latest *Kick It Over* (#6) should send a dollar to me, care of the *Up From the Ashes* address.

--Ronald Hayley

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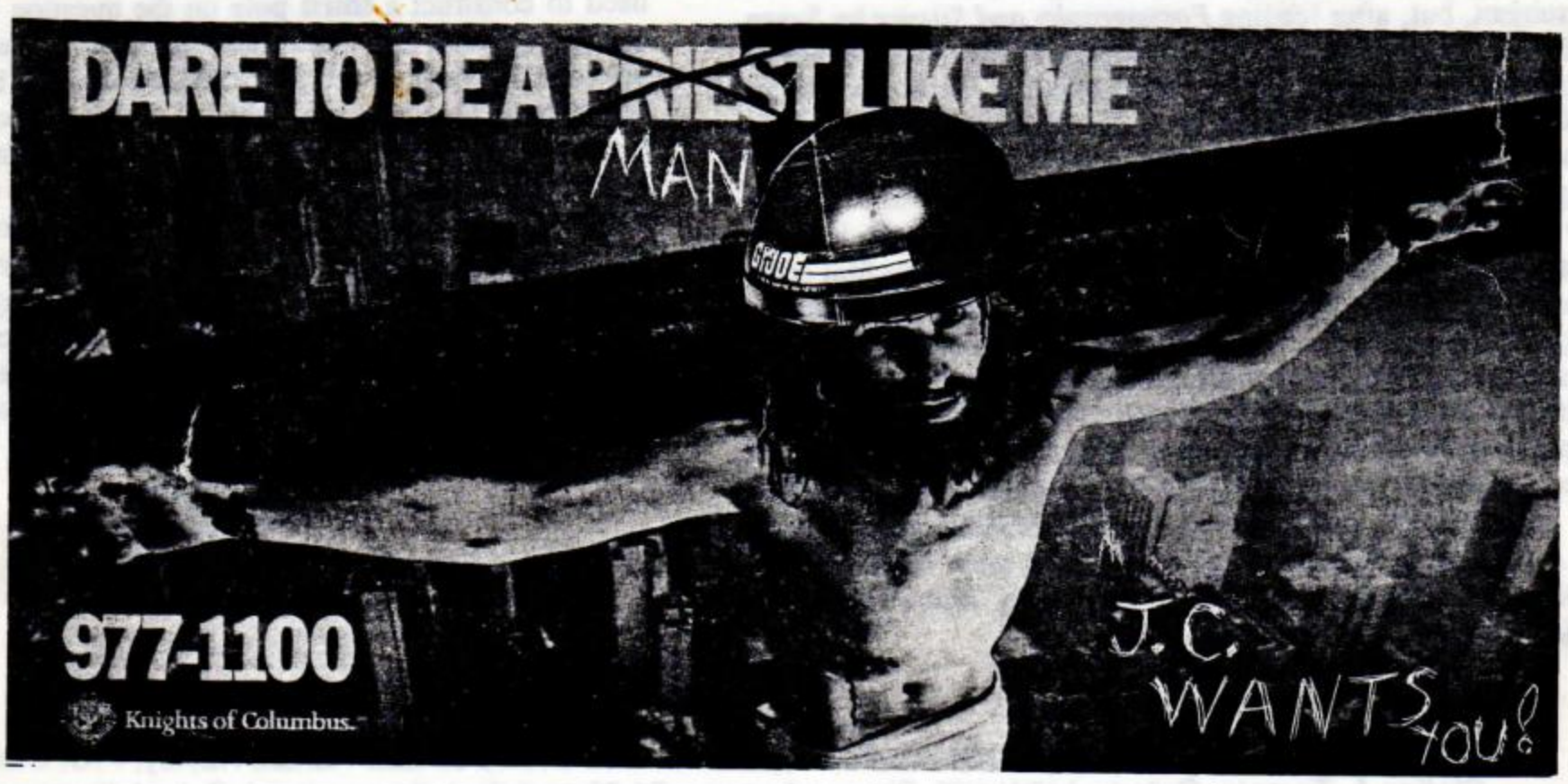

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Hermes
Box A
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